

CURRENT REPORT ON RURAL HOUSING PROGRAMS\*

October 1945

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(No attempt has been made to assemble a complete statement of programs. If certain approaches are of interest to you, write to specialist concerned.)

Alabama

Mamie Whisnant, home management specialist, writes (July 10): "We felt that the first step in our housing program should be some preliminary work with our women agents--to pool our thinking and our ideas before undertaking a joint State-wide program with the men and all groups concerned.

"Each of the five meetings was a day and a half or 10 hours divided into three sessions. Miss Forney made an introductory talk at each meeting stating the timeliness and the importance of rural house planning and women's part in it.

"The two questionnaires--on new construction and on remodeling--were read and discussed in detail in the first 3 hour session. I was in charge. Many good suggestions were made by each group of agents. These were recorded and later incorporated in the revised circulars that have been given the new title 'Rural House Planning', each with its respective subtitle 'New Construction' and 'Remodeling.' These circulars are now available." (Rural House Planning -- Remodeling, July 1945, Cir. 314, and Rural House Planning -- New Construction, July 1945, Cir. 313.)

"The second session was a 4-hour session devoted entirely to 'Let's Play House Planning', the Mississippi material. I was in charge of this session. In the beginning the agents were urged to plan a house, keeping in mind problems that they may encounter in their counties. A few of the agents took actual problems with which they were at that time assisting farm families.

"The agents were enthusiastic about the entire 10-hour course but were especially enthusiastic about this second session. They think it is an excellent device for teaching house planning to farm families, and I believe most of the agents will plan to use it as a club demonstration next January. Several counties are using it in July and others may include it in their fall program. However, we are encouraging them to make the survey first. The new circulars with questions and suggestions should create interest and stimulate thinking. We feel definitely that this should precede a house-planning demonstration for best results.

"The third session was conducted by Homer S. Fisher, specialist in farm buildings and grounds. He discussed general housing and construction problems and new types of building materials with which farm and home agents may be concerned. He also explained and demonstrated the house planning service and material available from the Agricultural Engineering Department of A.P.I.

\* Assembled by Mary Rokahr, extension economist, home management, from letters, State literature, and field visits.



"Miss Forney, the district home demonstration agents, Mr. Fisher, and I participated in discussing problems and answering questions raised by the agents during discussion periods. Miss Forney closed each meeting with an excellent summary. The agents are definitely feeling the need of assistance with housing and house-planning problems with which they are now confronted continually.

"At these housing meetings the agents expressed the need of immediate help on rural electric wiring. As a result we are now having a series of meetings for county and home agents in 11 different areas of the State covering 58 counties. These meetings were planned jointly with a power company. I have already attended one and I think it was excellent. The district agents (men and women) whose districts are involved also attend and preside at these meetings.

"I believe we are making a good beginning on our housing program in Alabama. We will know more definitely how to proceed when the survey has been completed this fall."

### Arkansas

A 3 week workshop in home management of the house and equipment was held in Arkansas in July. Twelve Arkansas county home demonstration agents, 4 State home management specialists, and 2 county home demonstration agents from 5 other States attended. Several teachers, homemakers, and utility workers also took the course. The students were given an opportunity to study individual problems such as planning tenant houses, a community house for home demonstration clubs, remodeling of kitchens, and the remodeling of farm homes. Most of the problems dealt with the medium - and low-income families.

Mena Hogan, home demonstration agent for Southern States, gave talks on "A Philosophy of Housing" and "Building a State Program in Housing."

Connie Bonslagel, State leader, writes concerning, housing workshops: "We are planning some county workshops which will last 2 days and will be held at camp sites where the buildings illustrate more or less the use of native materials in building. Our State happens to abound in native building materials.

"Through our neighborhood leader system, we plan to have at these workshops husbands and wives who expect definitely to build or remodel. We hope that each couple will go home with a house planned which they have worked out in collaboration with extension agents and specialists, as well as with a knowledge of laying stone, preparing rough lumber, and rocks for building."  
(July 12.)

### California

Jean Warren, home management specialist writes: "At 26 county economic conferences in the winter of 1944-45, recommendations were adopted for improving farm family living. These recommendations are summarized here.

"Housing: The recommendations from Kern County are a summary of several others: 'It is recommended that plans for farm homes at different cost levels and sizes be made and, when available, be given publicity. These plans are to be drawn to im-



prove family living and fulfill special needs of the farm family in the following manner:

1. Convenience in kitchens.
2. Privacy for individual members of family.
3. Definite place for planning and transacting business on the farm.
4. Outside shower and facilities separate from bathroom.
5. A house that will grow with the family.
6. Good storage spaces for food, clothes, and other possessions.
7. Safe sewage disposal and drainage.
8. Good lighting.
9. Construction of additional units.
10. Adequate living room.
11. Freezing units.
12. Home ground improvements.

"It was said that plans should meet reasonable standards of health, safety, and efficiency. There is a need for minimum standards for rural housing to avoid slums. The point was made that rural houses were different from urban houses; that houses will be both built and remodeled; that better farm labor housing is needed; and that there is a need for educational programs to let the people know the information which is now available.

"Home-ground improvements and beautification were mentioned by several committees. In one county there is a county gardener who can help on this problem.

"Rural sanitation and the problem of pure, safe domestic water supply were considered. Home safety and good nutrition were also mentioned.

"One-half of the committees made some recommendation about rural telephone service. Only one-third of California farm homes have telephones. Although California is one of the leading States in percentage of rural homes electrified, seven counties made recommendations regarding extension of electricity to areas not served by central power.

"Information was desired regarding home freezing methods, and several counties urged that more lockers and more home freezing units be made available. Some counties commended the methods of food preservation recommended by the Extension Service and said that these methods should be more widely known, but none mentioned specific ways of reaching more families. There seemed to be a general feeling in favor of community canning centers. Protests were registered against the jarlid sealing compounds which had been available during the war."  
(June.)

#### Florida

Miss Moore, home management specialist, reporting on a short course held June 2 to 9, said it covered such topics as making the feather comforter; hook rugs and braided corker sack rugs; and landscaping, using a sand table. The interior work



was centered on the kitchen as the dynamo of the home. Better management was stressed in the buying, production, selection, and preparation of food. Waste, even to one slice of bread, was discussed with 4-H Club girls.

### Illinois

Gladys Ward, home management specialist, writes: "We used a leaflet, 'Kitchen Plans,' in connection with both local leader training meetings and with our special kitchen clinic work in the State. Recently some women in the State, whom I had helped before the war, sent in their kitchen plans describing changes they have been able to make even during the war. I think this is quite an encouraging result, especially at this time." (June 6.)

### Massachusetts

Mrs. Harriet J. Haynes, home management specialist, writes: "At present, a co-ordinated effort of State and county workers and the power companies are working on a program which has as its aim the giving of assistance to farm people who are getting electricity and also those who plan to make improvements in their farm and home wiring and get new equipment.

"Last week, the first meeting was held in Worcester County at which the head of our rural engineering department, extension rural engineer, county agent leader, home management specialist, and a dozen or more representatives of the power companies and equipment sales managers were present.

"There are a few new rural lines being installed and the following seemed of paramount importance, if the consumer is to get the best service: (1) Adequate wiring, (2) choice and placement of equipment, (3) cost. The need to get needed information to the consumer before equipment is contracted for is recognized. A plan for contacting the new prospects or consumers is to be drafted by a committee." (July 17.)

### Minnesota

Mary May Miller, home management specialist, writes: "Six district conference meetings for all agents will be held in Minnesota for the purpose of planning 1946 farm building programs." "Farmstead Planning." by S. B. Cleland, Extension Folder 135, and "What Is a Good Farm House?" by M. M. Miller, Extension Folder 134, will be used at the meetings. (September 11.)

### Montana

Mrs. Margaret H. Tuller, home management specialist, says: "Housing work in Montana has taken on mammoth proportions. At the present time we have requests for house planning workshops from every home demonstration agent county in the State. It is my plan to help with the first workshop of each type (that is, planning for new homes and planning for remodeling old structures) in each of the counties. Subsequent workshops in other communities will be conducted by the home demonstration agent. That adds up to 106 days of specialist help, not including time en route." (July 12.)



## Nebraska

Ruby Loper, agricultural engineer, suggests that a good way to start a housing program is to get the women talking on the question, "What about your house annoys you the most?" Have the women make lists and then use their answers as a basis for further meetings and demonstrations.

Rizpah Douglas writes about Extension Circular 11-219, "Dressing up the Home in Wartime": "The materials used for illustrative material were made entirely from flour, feed, and seed sacks. The plain-colored ones used for protectors for upholstered chairs were dyed. Most of the others were figured." (April) Illustrated articles have appeared from time to time in the Nebraska Extension Service Review, describing results of the reupholstering clinics.

## Virginia

Ruth Jamison, house furnishing specialist, writes: "We have not gotten our housing program under way. . . . In my experience with women of the State, I find that many of the young couples are either remodeling a part of the family home, or attempting to build new houses of green lumber, therefore, I feel that it is not too early to begin to discuss housing problems among club women in order to combat this situation." (May 29.)



